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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0875  
RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE  
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA

UNCLAS KHARTOUM 000774

DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, SE WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG  
NSC FOR HUDSON AND PITTMAN  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN  
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [EAID](#) [MOPS](#) [KPKO](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: GOSS CALLS FOR USG INTERVENTION ON ABYEI

¶1. (SBU) Government of Southern Sudan Ministers Barnabas Benjamin (Regional Cooperation) and Luka Biong Deng (Presidential Affairs) requested US assistance on Abyei at a GOSS/UN/USG coordination meeting on Abyei relief efforts May 19. More specifically, they called for direct and immediate engagement on Abyei by Special Envoy Williamson. Deng is not satisfied with the results of the May 18 Ceasefire Joint Military Committee (CJMC) meeting in the destroyed town. A visibly irritated Deng admitted that the SPLA was poorly represented at the meeting and dismissed the decision to release NCP detainees as one "not applicable to the present context," and denounced the documents as "rife with language that is out of touch with the greater political situation."

¶2. (SBU) Regional Cooperation Minister Benjamin claimed that the May 16 decision, announced publicly at the SPLM Convention, by GOSS President Kiir to restrain SPLA forces along the 1956 border and disallow SPLA engagement in Abyei was "politically destabilizing in the South." "We cannot continue this posture without assurances from the international community that it will act," demanded Benjamin. Benjamin said that Kiir's decision to withhold troops from Abyei, despite the level of destruction and direct attacks on SPLA JIU forces, shows the SPLA's adherence to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. He contrasted this with the actions of the SAF, which resulted in skirmishes the evening of May 18/19 that killed two SPLA. (NOTE: The CPA states that only the Joint Integrated Unit should be deployed in Abyei. The SAF maintains both a JIU force and the 31st Brigade. END NOTE). Deng was considerably more direct. "The time has come where we will have to do something about this," said Deng, with a dismissive wave across the CJMC minutes. "A confrontation is inevitable, this cannot stand."

¶3. (SBU) CG Juba defended Kiir's decision to exercise restraint, pointing out that isolating the SAF role would bolster support for the SPLA/SPLM in reaching an agreement on Abyei. Moreover, space remained for action within the Ceasefire Political Commission (CPC) and it behooved the SPLM to come to the meeting well-prepared. CJ Juba advised that a detailed briefing to the diplomatic and press corps should be considered. UNMIS David Gressly proposed troop redeployments at the regional level, a reduction in SAF numbers within the CPA, deployment of a fully functional JIU, and freedom of UNMIS movement throughout Abyei and the former Western Kordofan ceasefire zone. Gressly and Acting CG further stressed the need for precise timetables. Deng enthusiastically accepted these points, and Benjamin committed to gathering a "planning group" following the close of tonight's national convention session.

¶4. (SBU) Returning to the USG role on Abyei, Deng requested calls by Special Envoy Williamson to both President Bashir and First Vice President Kiir on the matter, and suggested that immediate pressure must be applied to counter the "recklessly provocative SAF." Despite SAF comments during the CJMC, SAF Headquarters released a press statement on May 19 noting that SAF deployment to Abyei was required as a result of SPLA presence in the town, and would remain until SPLA soldiers were withdrawn. CG Juba promised to pass this

message and briefed Deng on the Charge's considerable efforts on Abyei since the crisis first broke, and plans for the May 30 SPLM meeting with Williamson. Deng was grateful for the information, but reiterated his call for direct approaches to Bashir.

15. (SBU) Comment: Benjamin and Deng have hourly and direct access to President Kiir (although no SPLM leader seemed to be talking to him about Abyei on May 15 when CDA and acting CG raised concerns on this very topic with Deng, Lino, and FM Alor). While passing detail of the Charge's efforts plus forthcoming initiatives by the Special Envoy has relaxed Deng's stance, and momentarily restrained an impassioned Benjamin, contact at higher levels would be appropriate, given Kiir's propensity to make snap decisions from which he rarely retreats.

FERNANDEZ